

BOOKS NOTED

The Modern Law of Charities by L. A. Sheridan and G. W. Keeton (3rd Ed., University College Cardiff Press, Cardiff, 1983) pp. i-lxxix, 1-315, appendices 316-480, index 481-502. Price \$45, ISBN 0 906449 54 5.

First published in 1962, with a second edition in 1971, Sheridan and Keeton's work has been a useful reference book for lawyers concerned to see what has been decided by the courts on dispositions of property to charitable uses. Chapter 1 on the origin and development of the law of charities draws widely on historical studies and governmental enquiries. An intriguing similarity between the language of the definition of charity in the preamble to the Statute of Charitable Uses 1601 and the fourteenth-century poem 'The Vision of Piers Plowman' is noticed as indicating how well-settled the elements of this definition were in 1601. Chapter 2 discusses general considerations about the current legal meaning of charity. Each of chapters 3-13 is devoted to a particular category of purpose. The dissection of purposes goes beyond the classic separation into religion, education, relief of poverty and other public purposes to a more refined division into charities involving animals, recreation, health, locality, public works, defence and the promotion of economic activity. There follow chapters on the *cy-près* doctrine, legislation on severance of invalid provisions, perpetuities and the duties of charitable trustees. The remaining chapters on the work of the English charity commissioners, taxation and rates are less relevant to the Australian reader. Appendices contain the text of related legislation.

The book's value for Australian lawyers is heightened by the extensive citation of decisions from various parts of the British Commonwealth and the many references to periodicals (including M.U.L.R.) and charities legislation throughout the Commonwealth. In the discussion of perpetuities legislation¹ some reference to the perpetuities legislation in Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland could have been appropriate.

For most questions on charities law an Australian lawyer will find the answer in the local work by F. M. Bradshaw entitled *The Law of Charitable Trusts in Australia*² but when wider research is needed Sheridan and Keeton will be a useful reference.

¹ Sheridan L.A. and Keeton G.W., *The Modern Law of Charities* (3rd ed. 1983) 249.

² Bradshaw F.M., *The Law of Charitable Trusts in Australia* (1983).

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